

Talbot County Economic Development Commission
215 Bay Street, Suite 5
Easton, MD
May 1, 2014 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Chairman, Ted Bautz, Paul Makosky, Haim Loran, Debbie Renshaw, Peter Dunbar, Walter Chase, Gerry O'Mara, Len Wendowski, and Erik Neil, Ph.D.

Ex Officio Members Present: Mike Henry, Timothy Jones and Terenda Thomas

Members Excused: Geoff Oxnam, Susie Hayward and John General

Attendees: Mayor Willey, Scott Warner, Laura Heikes, and Rose Potter

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 8:22 a.m. by Chairman Ted Bautz, in Conference Room 3, located at 215 Bay Street, Suite 5, Easton, MD 21601. A quorum was present.

Guest Speaker: Mike Henry provided an overview of the Easton Airports requests to the Town of Easton to have trees removed to come into compliance with the FAA safety requests. He reported that positive progress was being made and he expected to be able to move ahead with the approved plan in the near future but that the grant for funding the project from the FAA, that had been secured, had expired and this would require a new grant application.

Agenda and Minutes: The Agenda for the May 1st Commission Meeting was approved without changes. The Minutes from the April 3rd Commission meeting was approved with correction to Mayor's title.

Correspondence: The Director reported that correspondence was sent to Scott Warner and Josh Hastings thanking them for their presentation to the EDC last month regarding the Rural Maryland Council (RMC). A letter was forwarded to the members from Congressman Harris regarding the Airport Towers. Mike Henry reported that there is enough support from both Houses for the continued funding of the Towers. Additional correspondence, scheduled for next week, is a letter of request to the County Council asking them for consideration concerning the edits to the proposed Real Property Tax Credit amendments according to the EDC's recommendations. The most recent edits include the recommendation that a fund be created, in order to be available for the next fiscal year (FY 16). The fund would be used to make awards for expansion and attraction investment projects as they are vetted. The amount be placed in the fund will be a topic for discussion at the County Council meeting. A copy of the latest recommendations has been forwarded to the EDC.

Old Business: The Director reported the budget for the Talbot County Office of Economic Development has been submitted and Council has proposed less than what was requested but substantially more than is currently being invested. The public budget hearings are scheduled for Tuesday, May 6th at 3:00 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room and at 7:00 p.m. in the Easton High School Cafeteria and the EDC is encouraged to attend. The Council's proposed increases to the Economic Development Budget are an endorsement for the work of the EDO and the Commission. The Council is mindful that we continue to implement the strategic plan, develop infrastructure, and find opportunities to support economic development and growth.

The 6th Talbot County Business Appreciation Breakfast held on April 24th at the Milestone Conference center was well received by the business community. Mr. Bautz reported that the turnout was great and expressed appreciation for the coordination of the event. The feedback that Mr. Bautz received was very positive. For consideration for improvement next year:

Managing the traffic up front

A specific place for the sponsors to advertise

An interest for small business folks to participate in a sponsorship package

A write-up of the award winners as a take-away and synopsis in the programs

The Henker Group supported the marketing and branding effort and coordinating the sponsorship and award materials. Laura Heikes offered to assist us with the breakfast next year. Mr. Dunbar mentioned that he was sorry their town did not honor the Oxford Ladies' Auxiliary for their fundraising effort of \$60,000 for the fire department. Mr. Wendowski suggested we set our date for next year now, that way if the date is on people's calendars, they may plan around it all year long. This matter will be brought to the next EDC meeting. The Director reported eight corporate sponsors supported the event with contributions totaling \$6,500 and 207 businesses and community representatives attended the breakfast. 8 projects were recognized with 12 awards and the keynote Jason Broadwater received \$2,000 for his presentation. The event revenues reported a profit of \$800 to be used for next year's event.

New Business: The Director reported that there has been some interest from Mr. Loran, Chair of the Marketing Committee to meet with the Easton Economic Development Corporation (EEDC) and their newly hired Executive Director, Tracy Ward. Mr. Bautz suggested that Ms. Bethke and Ms. Ward meet first regarding direction and projects and that the Marketing Committee can set up a meeting with the EEDC for a date in June.

In the past, we have moved the EDC meeting to the various towns, beginning in September, as a way for exchange between the communities and the EDC. The September 4th EDC meeting will be in Trappe; the October 2nd meeting will be held in Oxford; the November 6th meeting will be held in St. Michaels; the December 4th meeting will be held in Easton. In order to comply with the county code and sunshine laws requiring notice of official meetings, the dates and times of these meetings will be advertised in advance and we will need to determine the location for each of the meetings at the June EDC Meeting. Laura Heikes offered the meeting room in the Moore Building for Trappe's location. The EDO will call each member of the towns to discuss locations for the meetings.

Mr. Bautz reported that Jason Broadwater prompted a lot of discussion in town, and he heard, "What are we going to do about it?". Now that people have heard his message, what can we do to implement his concepts? Ms. Renshaw reported that what they took away from Mr. Broadwater's presentation was that the towns need Broadband. A discussion ensued between members regarding which areas of the county are lacking high speed internet, the distances involved in providing the infrastructure and the cost. Broadband is one area of primary needs that must be addressed. The Director indicated that another challenge, presented by Mr. Broadwater, is the dynamic between what people do to create value versus getting paid for a job. Our perception of work is dynamic and

we need to be mindful of how we can support the connections that create good paying jobs and challenging work. Of special consideration is the opportunity for buildings to be available in towns as a place with internet connectivity to foster networks and activity. "The Hive" concept was talked about and how we establish a dialogue to support connections into internships with businesses or non profits. Mr. Wendowski indicated that the senior center has 10 –15 computers for community use, suggesting there may be a way to expand their usage. The Eastern Shore Entrepreneur Center (ESEC), has a great opportunity for "hotDesks" in Easton and is looking for space so entrepreneurs can come together to discuss and work through business plans together. Achievement Park is getting ready to open and will be supporting medical office space and a space for students to work on projects through Achievement Counts. These are all great opportunities for us, as a community to expand work opportunities.

Mr. Wendowski suggested we have Mr. Oxnam speak to the EDC meeting to explain how the entire Maryland Broadband system works. Mr. Warner reported that this community has been discussing the fact that high-speed is as important as any infrastructure, yet who is willing to pay for it? The Maryland Broadband Cooperative has hired two people under a federal grant, who have been out visiting the communities, to determine broadband coverage and internet access and it was suggested that they come to the next EDC meeting and discuss their findings for Talbot County. The discussion continued: "Easton has a couple carriers to choose from; however, if you are in St. Michaels, you may be challenged. Jason Broadwater spoke about wireless hotspots, which may attract entrepreneurs". Mr. Jones mentioned that this ties back to the recently completed "Talbot County and Towns Strategic Plan" that provides a review of what we have, answers what we are looking to attract, and then determines what the pieces are that we need to infill to make it all happen. Depending on the size the businesses' needs, the capacity to run databases and programs and store photos, the business just may have to be centered close to Easton to get a larger bandwidth." The Director suggested that the Business Environment and Marketing Committees might consider the implications of broadband internet availability or the lack of it when working on their initiatives and advise the County Council, the towns and village communities on options for what can be accomplished and the additional resources required to achieve the goals. Mr. Warner reported that there are broadband plans for the entire Eastern Shore and it may be helpful to hear about these plans from the Maryland Broadband Cooperative. "The first meeting we have should be educational, because it changes constantly." Mr. Warner suggested that we reach out to Parker Durham, as he is the county's IT person to determine the counties interest and capacity. The EDO agreed to invite speakers to discuss broadband and internet access in Talbot County for the June Meeting. It was discussed that the towns of Oxford and St Michaels are in the process of discussing their infrastructure options with the review of their Comprehensive Plans. Through this work the county will understand that there are infrastructure requirements needed within the next 2-5 years. The USDA Rural Development would be another resource to contact to invite to the EDC to present on the options to fund infrastructure in our community.

Business Environment Committee: Ted Bautz, Chair, reported they did not meet in April due to the Financial Literacy conference hosted by Junior Achievement at the Tidewater Inn. Their next meeting is scheduled on May 27th at 9:30 a.m. Although they did not meet, Sandy Coyman, Don Richardson and Geoff Oxnam have been offline, working on an integrated permitting and

inspections program, and it is moving very quickly in the right direction. Mr. Bautz reported they might have an update for the EDC meeting in June. This opportunity engages the town of Easton, Easton Utilities, as well as the County Government. The meetings are open to all commission members.

Marketing Committee: Haim Loran, Chair, reported the committee has decided to execute a targeted mailing and survey to county businesses that employ 10 people or more to identify what barriers we may need to address to attract and bring in new businesses. The ED Commission will be using funds from the EDO for mailing the surveys. The committee is also working to identify potential companies in testing labs as good targets for attraction to our community given our geography, our available small medical office sites and proximity to major metropolitan markets and our workforce. Mr. Loran also reported that he is interested in arranging a meeting with the Easton Economic Development Corporation, because it is essential that we cooperate on these initiatives. Chances are if we attract a business, it will be in Easton and it would be helpful to have their support in the process. Mr. Wendowski suggested that the Marketing Committee find out where the chef executives are currently living, and then show them the Eastern Shore. The next marketing committee meeting is on May 13th at 9:30 a.m.

Director's Report: The Director provided hard copies of activity for May and reported Ohmic Filters was purchased by an Ohio Company and has closed, impacting 8 people. The company has been in Talbot County since the early 80's and manufactured temperature and humidity sensors. The Director is working with two start ups and interest in finding space. A Tilghman Based entrepreneur has developed a prototype machine that takes mold and particulates out of the air and is working with UM MIPS to conduct reliability tests to verify performance criteria and market the product to those who do environmental remediation. The County Council and Planning Department are hosting three meetings with the 22 villages to receive input on the proposal to offer three new village zoning classifications. Ms. Renshaw reported that St. Michaels was very concerned about the new village zoning and the economic impact to the towns. A discussion ensued. The Director reported that the Talbot County Comprehensive Plan update will include this new proposed Village zoning as options and that the villages may retain their current zoning. The Director attended the MEDA Annual Conference "Research to Revenue: Harnessing Maryland's Intellectual Capital for Economic Growth", April 27 to the 29th at the Hyatt, in Cambridge. The conference was well attended and included many state and nationally recognized presenters. The agenda and presentations can be found on the website www.medamd.com. A meeting was held in Easton on April 30th to discuss the feasibility of identifying an Arts and Entertainment District in Easton which provides for real property tax credit allowances for investment within the designated area. Gary Early, Director, Talbot County Arts Council, led the meeting and Dr. Erik Neil and others who participated in the discussion and preliminary program review. Mike Thickle, Eastern Shore Entrepreneur Center is working with a group of local tech startups through monthly Meet Ups and is looking for cheap attractive space downtown to initiate a "hotDesks" project in Easton. The PWEC, based in Tilghman, continues to expand on their development project to renovate the Harrison Oyster House and build on their existing attributes for educating children, communities and the watermen about the impact of human activity on the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. The Network of Entrepreneurial Women World Wide will be hosting their twice yearly conference in Easton, Maryland on May 6th, inviting 36 internationally based women business owners to the Tidewater Inn for a three day retreat and tour. Our Last Monday of the Month's meetings with the

Towns of Talbot has prompted the organization of a special presentation for retailers and restaurants by SBTDC consultant has Casey Willson, who will present two seminars in St. Michaels, on May 7th. The March 2014 unemployment rate for Talbot County is at 6.5%, the state of Maryland is 5.9%. Talbot County has 1,176 people who are unemployed.

Mayor Willey reported that Easton has revamped its impact fee schedule, which caused significant savings to businesses who want to expand or relocate in the town of Easton. Based on New York State's recent advertised incentive, Easton has eliminated the Personal Property Tax on manufacturing equipment that is effective immediately. A letter went to the State Department of Taxation yesterday advising them to reduce the tax to zero. This news received a round of applause from the ED Commission and represents a major investment by both the Town of Easton and the county. The Mayor reported that anytime they visit businesses now, they have Easton Utilities accompany them because everything today hinges on broadband, Wi-Fi and wireless. **Walter Chase, Town of Trappe:** reported that Trappe's public hearings regarding the budget are scheduled for June 10th and June 22nd. On April 28th the Monthly Meeting with the Trappe merchants reported 10 people were in attendance and an agenda that included signage and other avenues of marketing their businesses events to area residents, tourists and Route 50 traffic. On May 27th Mitchums Steak House announced it would be closing. Bella Pizza closed about a month ago. The State Bank of Trappe Pizza continues to be in operation. The loss of these businesses will have a negative impact on the Town of Trappe as they created traffic flow and brought visitors downtown. The merchants are researching signage and awaiting a response from the State Highway Administration for placement of a sign that would direct traffic to downtown businesses. **Terenda Thomas, Department of Labor, Licensing and Registration (DLLR):** reported there is a very concerted effort on the part of DLLR to focus on businesses. As a result, every workforce development area was allowed to put together a 10-member team to attend the conference on May 7th. DLLR has two in-house business resource representatives; Art Reeside, responsible for Talbot County and David Prossner, who covers Caroline and Dorchester Counties. When the team comes together, the business resource representatives, including members from economic development offices, county libraries, the chambers, Chesapeake College, will discuss business resources and delivery of services. DLLR now intends for the in-house representatives to serve as consultants and identify the workforce issues that impact their ability to grow their business. DLLR partners extensively with Department of Social Services (DSS) to jobs to those DSS have identified as ready for work. **Erik Neil, Ph.D., Academy of Arts:** reported on the meeting to consider the Arts and Entertainment District meeting in Easton, and described it as a potential attraction for Easton with many of the prerequisites in place and some real economic advantages for the community and the artists who would make and sell art. The Academy of the Arts Museum is having their big gala this Saturday, May 3rd which kicks off the art and fundraising season. The Museum's visitor numbers are up over last year. **Len Wendowski, Town of Easton:** reported that this Saturday, May 3rd, there is the Multi-Cultural Festival at Idlewild Park. Easton Promise comes up before the Board of Zoning Appeals on May 15th for consideration of conversion to a homeless shelter. Now that the weather is breaking, the Town of Easton will begin street repairs. The town is still working on their FY 15 budget. The only item that came before the Town Planning Board was an application for a 114-unit apartment complex behind Wal-Mart. The hospital hired 12 certified nursing assistants after interviewing 20 people in Cambridge. **Tim Jones, Chesapeake College:** reported that 70%

of the nursing graduates stay in our service area. Chesapeake College Commencement will be held May 21st. The college is meeting with DLLR and the Business Retention Network, next Thursday, to specifically discuss how we support workforce development through training, for credits and continuing education. As an example, the college is working on programs for customer service, reading blue prints and computer skills. The college wants to provide basic training skills that can be used as entrée to a job or so that the employer can then continue to train on site according to their specific position. The college hired Lucy Hughes, Vice President of Institutional Development who has been employed at the Institute of the Arts in Philadelphia. The Allied Health Building construction is progressing and the college offered a job fair to recruit additional workers. **Gerry O'Mara, Agriculture:** made a recommendation to Chesapeake College to develop a course in microeconomics. Mr. O'Mara reported that because agriculture is weather dependant, they are way behind their normal planting schedule due to a cool and wet spring. **Peter Dunbar, Town of Oxford:** reported that the town of Wells by the Sea, in England has expressed interest in a sister relationship with Oxford, given their very similar size and economics and that Oxford is very interested. The County and DNR approached Oxford to be included in a county wide water trails program as an expansion to what has been identified in St. Michaels and an opportunity to bring people into town and support the existing local businesses. Oxford issued as RFQ a couple months ago to rebuild the docks and boat ramps surrounding Schooner's Restaurant and will proceed with the engineering for the project. There will be a public hearing in two weeks relevant to the storm water issues and enabling legislation to allow the town to establish the storm water fund to provide stable financial support to various storm water projects for the next several years. **Deborah Renshaw, Town of St. Michaels:** reported they had a meeting with the representatives of the new owners of Perry Cabin and they reviewed plans for a proposed expansion which includes adding new rooms and cottages for families. St. Michaels just approved a 15-unit housing infill project, being designed to address housing needs for the new millennium generation. St. Michaels lost a couple of their volunteer firefighters because they cannot afford to live in St. Michaels. However, St. Michaels is close to opening a 40-unit, restricted income housing called Riverwoods with one-bedroom units leasing for \$650 per month. Almost all of their retail stores in St. Michaels are filled, which is never a problem; retaining the retailers is the challenge. St. Michaels is in the process of entering into a MOU with Easton Shore Land Conservancy for a green redevelopment design on Fremont Street to attract professional service companies who require offices. Ms. Renshaw has been meeting with a client that proposes individual small structures without kitchens for hotel like uses to offer people who are looking for experiences in a town environment. The Town of St. Michaels is still in process with hiring communications person. The Acme contract has not been signed. **Haim Loran, Manufacturing:** No additional report. **Mike Henry, Eastern Airport:** Mr. Henry had a telephone conference with the FAA regarding the environmental assessment; they approved the submitted document for critical aircraft. The apron project is moving fast; it is going out for bids in the next couple of weeks. The engineer's estimate is \$1.4 mil for the rehabilitation of the terminal apron. According to their consultants, the construction will be complete prior to Airport Day on September 27th. Mr. Blair from Spitfire has acquired a couple of aircraft, one is flyable and one is still in the box and will be building a second hanger. Traffic and fuel sales still indicate steady growth over last year in spite of the winter and the weather. Trident is having their Ribbon Cutting Open House on the May 16th at noon. **Paul Makosky, Member at Large:** No report. **Laura Heikes, Talbot Bank, Trappe:** reported that Talbot Bank would like to help with

any of the good things happening in Talbot County. **Scott Warner, Regional Council:** thinks it is great that the EDC is discussing broadband. With regard to co-working space and "hotDesks," the MSRC had a grant a year ago to establish one, but they could not get it done quickly enough so they placed the project in Salisbury. This year there has been some positive energy and the Director has been a great advocate to get spaces here. John General, the MUST coordinator, has followed up with Santo Grande and DCT about transportation to/from the college, Mr. Warner was heard many complimentary responses regarding the Business Appreciation Breakfast, including the peacock at registration. **Rose Potter, Town of Trappe:** reported that she was glad to be at the Business Breakfast this year and to see the standing room only was good. She appreciated all the effort extended to plan the event.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

Economic Development Commission Meetings are held at 8:00 a.m. on the first Thursday of each month. The meetings are open to the public. The next meeting will be held on June 5th at 215 Bay Street, Suite 5, Conference Room #1, Easton, MD.

Rural Maryland Council <http://rural.maryland.gov>

Connect America Fund <http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/connecting-america>

Maryland Upper Shore Transit (MUST Bus) www.mustbus.org

Revised Impact Fee Study

A public meeting was held in the Council Chambers on January 21st, 2014 to discuss revisions to the Impact Fee Study. Please click here for a copy of the revised document.

<http://www.town-eastonmd.com/TempMedia/Impact%20Fee%20Study%2021Jan14.pdf>

Aday Remus: Jason Broadwater's Development Tool: <https://adayremus.com>

To view the Proposal to Amend Nutrient Management Regulations, along with the Extension Bulletin to be incorporated by reference in the Maryland Nutrient Management Manual:

<http://mda.maryland.gov/Pages/Proposed-Regulations.aspx>

A fact sheet "AgBrief: Phosphorous Management Tool - An Overview of the Proposed Regulations" is also available online at:

http://mda.maryland.gov/Documents/ag_brief/AgBrief_PMT_092013.pdf

The Maryland Workforce Exchange and labor market information are available online at

<https://mwejobs.maryland.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx>.